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## Preface

Welcome to *Normando*. This book was written as an ode to the Normando.

### **About Normando, the Most Interesting Man in the World**

According to his bio on the website: Norm Woody spent a dozen years at Microsoft leading field projects, engagements, and managing Fortune 100 technical contracts. Focused on emerging technology, Norm has led a number of joint-development and global technology adoption projects focused on performance improvements, expanding capabilities, and innovative cost savings. Norm has degrees in physics and technical communication.

We know him as the coolest dude at OpenStax. And the unofficial OpenStax Dad.

### **Coverage and Scope**

This book illustrates all the things we like about Norm. We'd like to wish him all the best over at Rice Online.

### **Additional Resources**

Here, we'd like to thank Norm for all the things he's done for us. For all the project managing and all the fun times. Thank you for always looking out for us. Thank you for being patient and kind.

There's a secret "goodbye-toby" (*The Office* reference) channel on Slack for people to submit their favorite Norm memories and moments. For this week long project, we had a lot of fun reminiscing about all the fun Norm memories. We've learned a lot from you, and we all shared your wisdom. (Most notably, erase the board in the up and down motion, lest your booty will shake.)

Intro to Norm  
class="introduction"  
Distant Galaxies.

This  
beautiful  
image  
shows a  
giant cluster  
of stars  
called  
Messier 80,  
located  
about  
28,000  
light-years  
from Earth.

In the  
middle is  
Norm.

Because he's  
awesome.  
And what's  
cooler than  
Norm in the  
middle of  
star clusters.

(credit:  
modification  
of work  
by The  
Hubble  
Heritage  
Team  
(AURA/  
STScI/  
NASA))



## PURPOSE & DESCRIPTION

The **purpose** of this document is to document all of our favorite Norm-quotes, Norm-moments, Norm-stories, Normisms and messages to effectively communicate to Norm how awesome he is and what an impact he has had on OpenStax so that he may remember us fondly and visit often.

## RESOURCES

Employees of OpenStax via the #amp;goodbye-toby secret channel on Slack.

## POSSIBLE STORY TARGETS

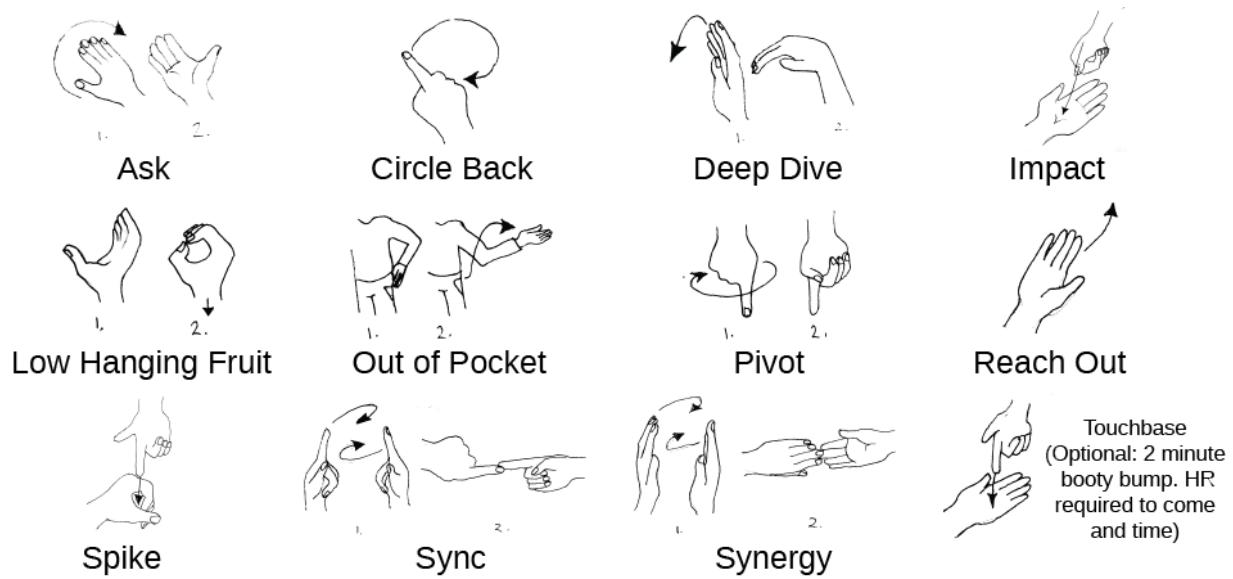
LARISSA DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS SO I DON'T KNOW.  
Is Norm an appropriate target?

## An Ode to Normando

### STORIES

#### New Hire Announcement #flashbackfriday

Norm is our new Project Manager for the new OSK12 initiative. Previously, Norm was at **Microsoft** where he was a Senior Technical Account Manager. After Microsoft, Norm co-founded and helped develop a new company focused on automating investment trading decisions with the goal of improving returns for charities. Norm also has his PMP certification and will be helping to manage timelines and coordination for the multi-team OSK12 project.



The content team has hand gestures for Normisms and regular business jargon. Source: Modified art by Ryan S

**Debshila**

My first year here, I was walking over to the women's restroom. Norm was walking ahead of me, and he just walked into the women's restroom. I stood there for a minute. He came out frazzled and saw me outside, and totally cracked up.

### **Maher**

I'll miss your **mixed drinks**.

**Note:**“Mind if I adjust the **lights**? ”

### **Alan**

When I was interviewing as a contractor, the initial call with Norm was set for ~5:00pm and he must've gotten caught up in some meetings, so he contacted me and said “Is tomorrow at 7:00am ok?” and so my interview was conducted with me still half asleep and Norm laying out grand plans for how he wanted to grow the CS team and the organization. Now about two years in, those initial plans have largely been met spot on or exceeded.

### **Alina**

Norm - On your first day, I drove you to HR, Rice Parking, and to get your ID at the Rice police station. I figured it would be a morning of small talk - boy, was I wrong! We briefly talked about your children and how you had married your high school (or perhaps college) sweetheart. By the time we got to my car, you had jumped into your first **stakeholder** interview, asking me about OpenStax's processes and challenges. I was only two or three months into the job, and I was surprised to be asked for this kind of input, but you genuinely listened and followed up on what I said. I was, and continue to be, inspired by how you hit the ground running from day one,

just as I'm sure you will do at Rice Online.  
Cheers,  
Alina (The First Stakeholder)

**Bonne**



Credit: Adam Jaime/Unsplash

It was the day before we left for Christmas break and the office was bare. He called the people over individually and asked them which **fireball shot** they liked best. One was made with lemon and the other was made with orange. It was like 11am.

## Larissa

Day before Thanksgiving 2015. I left my Chipotle the day before and came into the office to get it. It's dark. I hear Adele's "Hello" playing (super hip and happening song at the time). "Who is here?" I wonder. IT'S NORM. Sitting in the dark. Listening to Adele saying hello from the other side.

He asked me if I was going to stay (to work, I assume). I said no. Though this is a true testament of how hard he works.

Anyway, thank you for always being kind and patient. Also offering food. It's very much appreciated.

If there was a Best OpenStax Dad award, you'd win it.

**Note:**"Have you tried diagraming it?" re: Mary's writing

## Andrea K (former Intern)

I think some of my favorite memories of Norm would be whenever he would stay late and the office would clear out, he would blast music from his speaker to jam along to while doing work. Also, him explaining to me and the other **project management** interns that you should always erase a white board in an up and down motion so that your **booty** doesn't move so much in front of a room of people. Plus his cheesy music that he played during the Friday meetings.

## Britt

He was equally as excited about the **margarita machine** (even months later) as I was.

He always gives me a **Happy Father™** smile when I pass him in the halls.

He was the first person I heard spouting corporate jargon (probably the first time in my life, in an un-ironic way) and I remember thinking he was legitimately speaking a foreign language.

**Note:**[WALKS INTO SCRUM] “I hope i’m not intruding. The ask is (if you have **bandwidth**) is to please update your cards. Anyways, anything hot?”

### **Jeff**

When I first started Norm and I shared an office. He wore a blue tooth ear piece that he used to remotely attend meetings and because he liked to keep the office dark, I could never tell if he was wearing the ear piece or not. As a result, over my first few days I’d start to talk to him or ask him a question and he would just politely nod and point to the ear piece indicating he was unavailable. After this happened a few times I’d just stay quiet when at my desk. This whole thing was very strange to me because for the longest time, I honestly did not know what Norm did. I had no idea what his role was, what team he was on, how he was involved, and I didn’t know when I could ask him or not, so for weeks, my office was the darkened corner that housed the mysterious figure that was The Norm.

**Note:**“Junk. Piece of junk.”

### **Alana**

On of my fav Norm memories... When Norm first started, he was in the office opposite mine. He had a wall filled with post it notes that he was using to understand the key objectives for each team and the organizational strategy. There were A LOT of post-its on that wall:



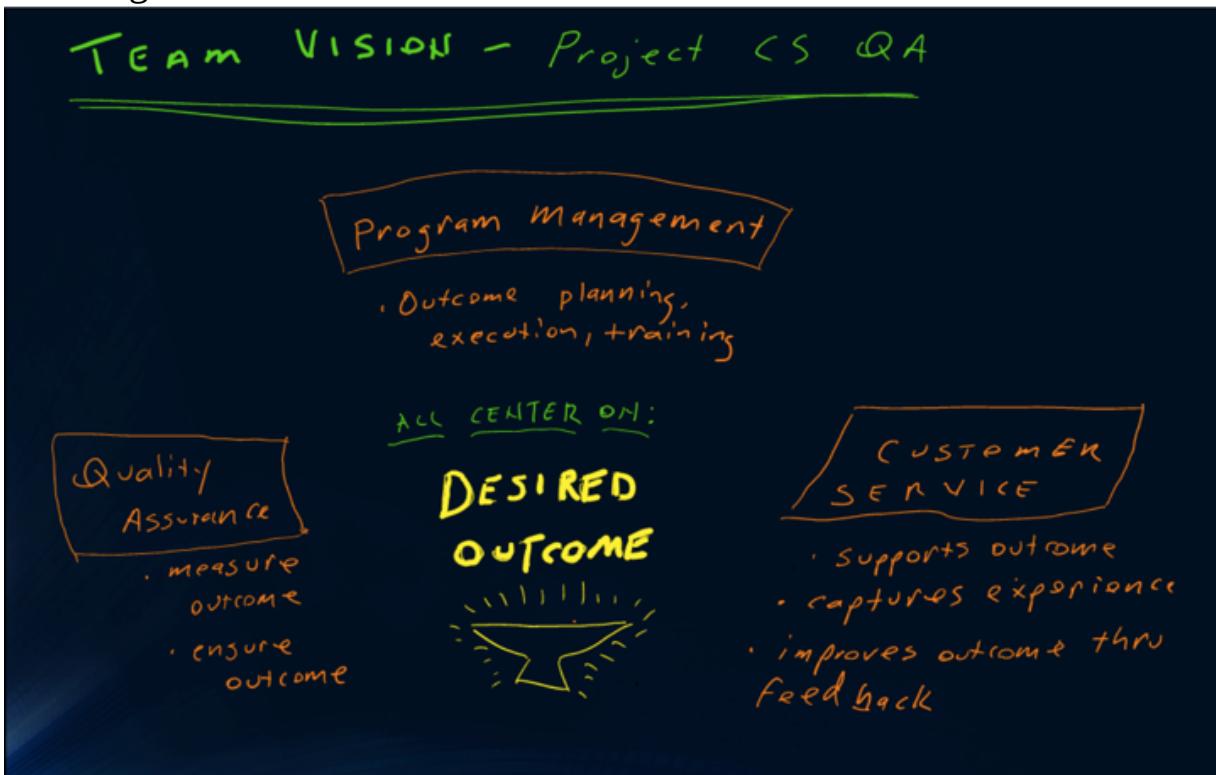
**Note:**"IT IS THE SOURCE OF MY POWER"

## Britney

My first day, Norm came and found me. He gave me his card and said "I heard you were new here. If you need anything here's my card." He was the first person to give me a card. He was my first friend.

**Note:**"I've got a late night, going for food, you want anything?"

## The Magic Anvil



Source: Kerwin/Slack

## **Kevin**

A few years back I ended up getting my own **jabra speaker** for meetings, which I called "The Norm Woody Memorial Jabra Speaker". Now it really will be...

Norm taught me that you should always erase a whiteboard using vertical strokes. Apparently using side-to-side motions makes your butt shake funny, and you don't want that...or do you?

**Note:***turns off the lights* "Is this ok?"

## **Osiris**

We were working in the Quiet Room on a Saturday and had ordered pizza. He walked in (did not know he was there) still holding onto **Whataburger** and grabbed a slice and asked how we were doing.

**Note:***Norm breaks out the Phil Collins...  
after hours you suddenly hear Top 40 hits...*

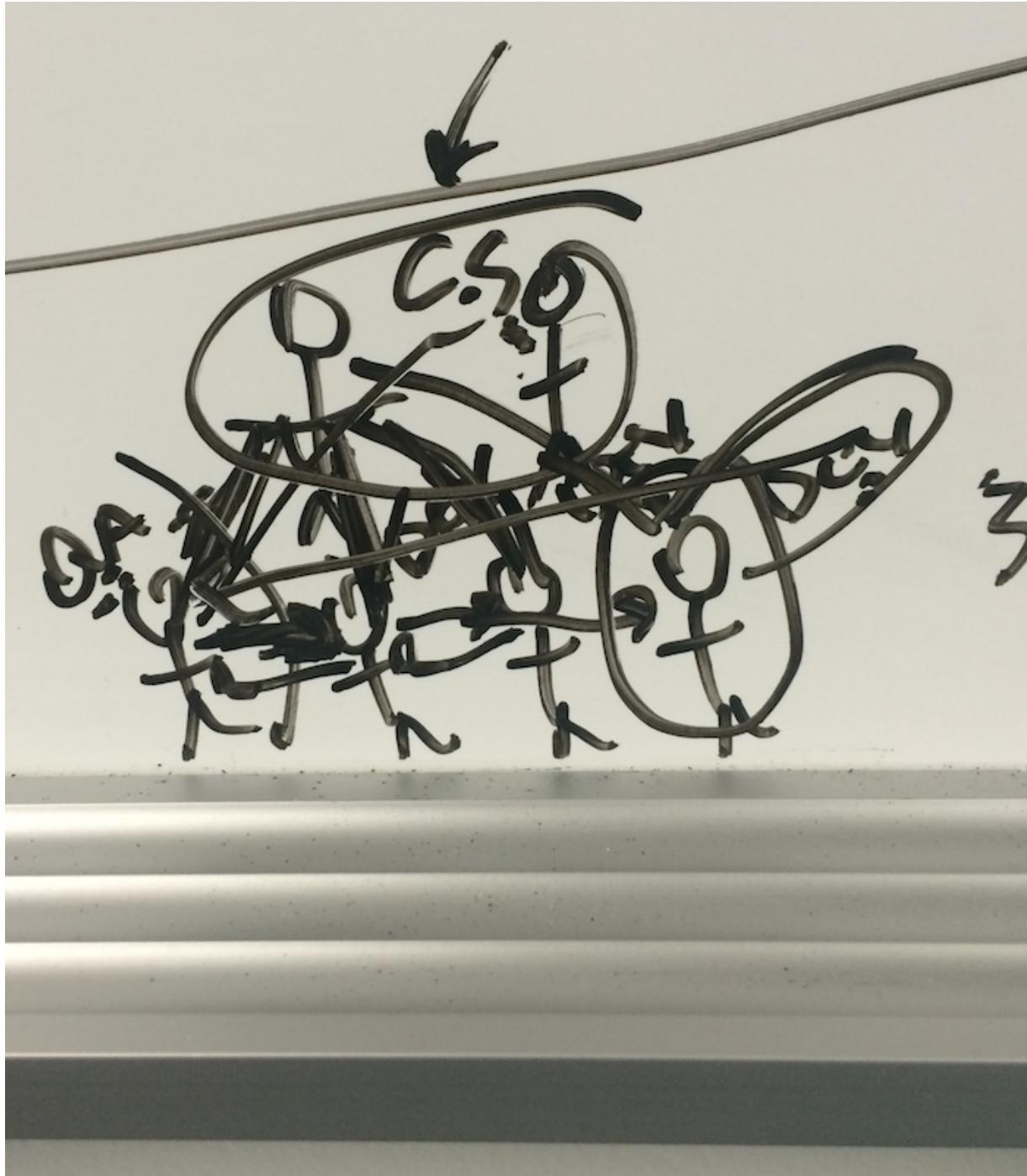
## **Meera**

All I can think of Norm is....Open Door... Smile... Raised eyebrows....“Anything Hot?....Cool Cool” Shuts the door

## **Daniel**

Do you all remember when we decorated that house for vita-living and Norm brought the **snow cone** machine and we ate tons of snow cones?  
Also who owns a snow cone machine?

-Insert Slack winky face emoji-



Source: Jeff/Slack

**Note:** "Here's my working agenda: \_\_\_\_" / "Would it be of value if we \_\_\_\_?"

### Mary

The first time I ever took notes for the **Operations** meeting, I was really intimidated by all the new tech vocabulary, especially Norm's. Norm is so ingrained in all of OpenStax's projects that it was like he was speaking OpenStax-ese...and while I got most of it down, I couldn't have told you what any of it meant. Fast forward to a few weeks later, and when I understood 100% of what came out of Norm's mouth, I knew I'd hit my stride. Fast forward to a year later and I was applying the long term planning strategies I'd heard Norm talk about to both my OpenStax work and my grad school work.

### Kerwin

The whole QA-CS team went to an escape room for a holiday team building event last year. Norm acted as the dutiful project manager: writing everything down in his notepad, assigning people to puzzles that weren't cracked yet, and checking in for updates. Thanks to his efforts, we escaped the room with time to spare. I honestly don't think we would have succeeded without Norm.

### Alina

Norm and I were in the kitchen when a guest who was working in the office came over to make himself some coffee. The guest asked where the coffee stirrers were. We were out of the plastic ones, so we pointed him to the small spoons. Taking a spoon and also noticing Norm's suit, the man said something like, "Y'all are fancy here!" Norm said, "We aren't - just some of us stick out like sore thumbs."

### **Ryan S**

One time he hijacked an intern interview.

### **Kim**

Dear Norm,

It has been such a pleasure to work with you. I know others will share stories about your numerous catch phrases, that time you inexplicably began every session of an all-hands with scenes from the Island, and your tendency to blare "Norm Rock" playlists in the dark, but I'll most miss the way you always tried to inject a sense of humor and fun into our day-to-day. Thank you for your enthusiasm, your tireless dedication, and for always being willing to help on any task. I am so thrilled for you as you move on to this exciting opportunity at Rice Online, but we will truly miss you.

All the best to you and your family!

Kim

### **Burger King Crown**



**Burger King Crown** Source: JP/Slack

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May 5th



**Micaela McGlone** 12:24 PM  
are you back?



**Norm Woody** 12:24 PM  
Apologies, I'll take off my Burger King crown and head that way....

Souce: Micaela (obviously)/Slack

Micaela: Let me provide some context: We were supposed to go get our lunches at 11:30 and then meet back at the office at noon for a meeting.

**Greg**

Norm dressed up as "The Most Interesting Man in the World" for Halloween. He walked up to my desk holding a **6-pack** and said 'I don't always drink beer, but when I do I drink Dos Equis.' I totally got it (and took the beer 'cause free beer).

### **Alina**

At Courtney's baby shower, the soon-to-be-parents filled out a quiz that included the question, "Who will change the first diaper?" Somewhat hesitatingly, they said Courtney's husband would probably do this, and Norm responded from the back of the room with a resounding, "THAT'S RIGHT!"

### **Phil G**

I won this copy of **The Notebook** in one of Norm's **competitions**. It makes me smile every time it resurfaces in my desk drawer.



Source: PhilG/Slack

Note that it is still in the original shrink wrap. I don't want it to lose value.

## Ross

When OpenStax was going through a rapid expansion phase, early on, it was decreed that we needed a play day to reward us for all the hard work, and give us a chance to get to know all the new faces around the office. So an afternoon at **Dave & Busters** was scheduled. We all put our work on hold, to go have fun bowling and shooting pool and eating. Except, Norm decided that some things just couldn't be rescheduled. He had an interview already scheduled for a project manager? position, and just had the

candidate show up at Dave & Busters, and conducted the interview at one end of one of the long tables in the big party room, while we all ate snacks and drank drinks, and generally carried on.

### **Nicole**

Norm, Congratulations on your new role! I've learned so much from you during your tenure at OpenStax and I know your impact on our organization will continue long after you've left, which is a great thing! Please don't be a stranger.

### **Micaela**

My favorite memory about the **Risk/The Island** meeting was that we only had like 15 or 20 minutes to play our games of risk. A hilariously inappropriate amount of time for **Risk**.

### **Anonymous (But Also Important)**

Dad-Norm gave me excellent advice and always treated me well with respect.

### **Dante**

Norm invited me to camp with his family for Thanksgiving. In the end I said I wouldn't camp but would visit them at the campsite for a day... I cooked some stuff at home and took it to the campsite, thinking there was no way I could cook it over there. But somehow Norm and his wife managed to cook this giant Thanksgiving lunch in the little cabin that they rented, while keeping their **kids** (mostly) under control. Project management skills?

## **Alana**

Norm is like a TV dad - one of those dads that doesn't exist in real life. He is tough, but loving. When his kids come into the office, they are very affectionate with him. It is clear that they respect and admire him. Very inspiring.

## **Micaela**

My favorite Norm-kids memory is meeting his youngest son a few years back. Norm said, "go introduce yourself" and he walked right up to me, stuck out his hand to shake mine and said, "Hi, I'm **Jack**. I'm five."

Another **Norm-kids** memory: At the Zoo Lights holiday party a few years ago the twin girls got a hold of Sam and talked to him about how good the food is at the Aquarium and that if he ever needed to take me out for a date they *really* recommend the restaurant there.

## **Phil G**



Credit: Thomas Habr/Unsplash

For a period of time, Norm and I had 30 minute meetings that were scheduled during lunch. We would usually have a working lunch and would go some place close by, like **whataburger** or **chick-fil-a**. One day, he recommended we go to a place called “**tornado burger**,” and offered to drive. I did not know about this place at the time, but agreed. We hopped in his yellow dodge neon, he turned to me and said “i’m going to drive a little fast.” Apparently this place was way outside the beltway, something like 16 miles away. He then proceeded to drive like a bat out of hell for the next 20 minutes. We made it to tornado burger without incident, and ate the best burgers I’ve had in Houston. On the way back, he had me reschedule his afternoon meetings around. Sometimes you just need to heed the call of the burger.

## **Fred**

Norm would occasionally keep me after a meeting to demo the latest **Surface** feature, and almost achieved the impossible: making me slightly envious of a Microsoft product.

## **Robert**

He has sent this to me on more than one occasion: “When you take a mental break, you might value another **bing.com** image on its home page today.” It’s usually a really cool looking building, like a new museum, and then we get into an engaging discussion of modern architecture.

## **Glossary**

### **repro**

Short for reproducing bugs.

### **boil the ocean**

To undertake an impossible task or project or to make a task or project unnecessarily difficult. All the fish will die.

### **"Anything Hot?"**

A phrase Norm uses frequently to check in on updates or new happenings.

### **logging investments**

aka time tracking but also not

### **cobwebs of the brain**

confusion, disorder